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tinue at Menindie until the 21st of December, the earliest time at which a special messenger could have reached from Melbourne.

Your Committee intrusted the fullest authority to the leader; he appointed Mr. Wright; personally gave that officer definite instructions; and in his despatch to the Committee stated that if Mr. Wright was allowed to follow them out, he felt confident the result would prove satisfactory. So far from imagining that Mr. Wright, at a postal distance of 570 miles from Melbourne, required pressure to carry out instructions received from the leader himself, your Committee were under the impression that the less they interfered with such instructions the better; the more especially as thesei nstructions, though referred to in the despatch, were not forwarded to, or seen by, your Committee. And they are confident that any other persons, not judging *ex post facto*, but placed in a like position, would have arrived at a like conclusion.

They will ever recur with painful memory to the saddening incidents which surrounded the death-scenes of Burke and Wills; and, worst of all, to the imputation that these brave explorers sank under the mortifying conviction that your Committee had faithlessly withdrawn from them that succour and support upon which, in the hour of their need and in the moment of victory, they had confidently relied; but, conscious that they have acted throughout with calm deliberation, and with the most anxious desire to secure the safety as well as the success of the Victorian Expedition, your Committee cannot admit that the disasters of that expedition are to be traced to any oversight on their part.

Pending the investigation of the Royal Commission, your Committee abstained from presenting at the usual period of the session the Report they have now the honour to submit.

WILLIAM F. STAWELL, Chairman.

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2. *Extracts of Despatch from MR. LANDSBOROUGH to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Queensland, dated Bunnawannah, Darling River, June 1st, 1862.*

I do myself the honour to inform you that the expedition party under my command arrived here yesterday in safety and in good health.

Our route from the Gulf of Carpentaria, Mr. Gregory's route to South Australia, and the routes of other explorers, demonstrate the fact that sheep, cattle, and horses can be taken at a sinall cost and in the finest condition, from South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, and the inland districts of Queensland, to stock the country near the Gulf of Carpentaria, or for exportation to India or elsewhere.

The road we came was so easy from the richness of the pasturage and the abundance of water, that a foal, named "Flinders" from his having been foaled on the Flinders River, followed his mother most bravely from the time he was a few hours old until his arrival here.

When we were on Gregory's route to South Australia, and for some time previously, we took many opportunities of inquiring from the blacks respecting the explorers they had seen. This we were enabled to do, as Jemmy, the native police-trooper, could speak their language. We learned from them that they had seen, during the last ten moons, explorers to the eastward, but that they had seen none with larger animals than horses.

I am sorry to have to inform you that our familiarity at last led to our having a hostile collision with them on the Barcoo River, near where the blacks attempted treacherously to take Mr. Gregory's party by surprise during the night. They tried to take us at night by surprise. If they had succeeded, they would, no doubt, have overpowered us; but it was during Jemmy's, the native trooper's, watch; and, as he always keeps his watch well, he woke us

when they were within a few yards of our fire, and we fortunately succeeded in driving them away. Next morning, very early, two of them came near our camp. At my request, Jemmy warned them to leave us, for that now we had a most hostile feeling towards them. Instead of their showing the least symptom of leaving us, they got their companions, who were in ambush, heavily armed with clubs and throwing-sticks, to join them. Under these circumstances we fired upon them, and, in following them up as far as to where the horses were feeding, one of them was shot and another slightly wounded in the leg.

I had very little assistance from Walker's previous discoveries, as he had left instructions that while his chart and journal were in Captain Norman's charge no one should be allowed to take notes from them. I tried to follow Mr. Walker's tracks to the Flinders River, where he reported he had left the tracks of Burke's party. After tracing them with considerable difficulty for four days we reached plains near the Leichhardt River, where so much rain had fallen on the rich soft soil that it was impossible to trace them farther. From the Leichhardt River we travelled over well-watered country to the Flinders River then up that river through fine rich pastoral country to about latitude  $20^{\circ} 30'$ , from which we reached "Bowen Downs" in a few miles. The creeks and the river that water that country I knew previously to a certain point down the river, but beyond this point I did not know where the river flowed. On this expedition I followed it down to near its junction with the Barcoo River, and discovered it to be the Thomson River. After leaving the well-watered country of "Bowen Downs," with the assistance of one of the blacks of that locality, we came through a fine rich country to the Barcoo River; then, without following the river farther, or searching ahead for water, we went across to the Warrego River, the horses being for a day and part of a night without water. The country is, therefore, I have no doubt, on the whole, well watered. From the Warrego we tried to go to the south-eastward, but, from not knowing the country, and not finding water, we returned. On this occasion, although the weather was cold, the horses suffered very much. We travelled almost incessantly day and night in going from and returning to water; the horses were without water for seventy-two hours. In returning we found water in a creek in which we found no water at the place we crossed it on our outward route. If I had had plenty of rations, I probably would have searched with one of the aborigines for water before taking the whole of the horses on a journey of that kind.

Afterwards we followed the river down to near Kennedy's No. 19 Camp, to the station of Messrs. Williams, where we received a most hospitable reception, learned the melancholy fate of Messrs. Burke and Wills, sold some expedition supplies which we thought we should not require any more, and bought rations to take us to this. Following the Flinders River up from the Gulf of Carpentaria took us for a long distance in a more southerly than easterly direction, then in a more easterly than southerly direction. About twenty miles below where we left the Flinders River we saw horse-tracks, which were probably made by Mr. Walker's party when on his route from the Nogoa River to the dépôt at the Gulf of Carpentaria. Where we saw the tracks of Walker's party the channel was about 120 yards wide, with a sandy bed and a shallow stream flowing along the surface. Lower down and higher up the river we saw the fresh tracks of a steer or cow, and on "Bowen Downs" saw similar tracks. We had so little meat that we would have tried hard to have found the beast to kill it for provisions, if I had not thought, from seeing the tracks of a dray in the same locality, that we were near a station.

The point where we reached the Barcoo River, in latitude  $24^{\circ} 37'$ , is nearly south from where we left the Flinders River.

Last night I learned that Mr. Howitt had received instructions to wait for

[DEC. 8, 1862.]

us at the dépôt on Cooper Creek. If I had known that there was to have been a dépôt there, I would have gladly gone to it from the Thomson River. Now I intend proceeding down the river to Menindie, where I purpose, if necessary, to take the most advisable mode of letting Mr. Howitt know of our return from the Gulf of Carpentaria.

There is a camel on this run, which I will endeavour to get and take to Menindie.

Mr. Bourne, who is a good bushman and a good judge of country, has read this letter, and does not think that I have given a too favourable account of the country along our route from the Gulf of Carpentaria.

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*3. Extract of a Letter from JOHN KENT, Esq., to Sir RODERICK MURCHISON,  
dated Brisbane, Queensland, 17th August, 1862.*

I HAVE sent two tracings, showing Mr. F. Walker's route from the head of the Barcoo to the Gulf of Carpentaria; and as it is the first reliable information given of this portion of the north-eastern interior of New Holland, will prove interesting. It shows conclusively that it is not "all barren from Dan to Beersheba," and proves that if the interior be regarded as a plain, that its greatest elevation would be found at its north-eastern angle. The tropical rains must send down large quantities of water during the north-west monsoon from the nucleus on the granitic range in  $19^{\circ}$  S.,  $144^{\circ}$  E.; and so long as the interior preserves the character of an elevated table-land, the streams would be perennial. I think there can now be little difficulty in explaining the water-worn appearances on Sturt's desert.

The recent explorations of Burke and Walker prove that between the meridian  $138^{\circ}$ , to the eastern coast, and south to the Barcoo, is included the most valuable portion of the interior of Australia. For its development, the immigration of Indian coolie labour is essential, and this object will be promoted by establishing a steam-route to Singapore (linking on with the Calcutta and Ceylon line) through Torres Straits; and as the attention of the great cotton interests of Manchester and Paisley is now directed to Queensland, it is much to be desired that they will forward the views of a company recently formed here for placing a line of steamers on that route.

The discovery of auriferous fields near Gladstone, and the Peakdowns of Leichhardt, show that the riches of the Australian Cordilleras are not confined to the southern and central portion; while the recently proved existence of many thousands of red oxide of copper on the surface, near the latter locality, indicate the extent of our mineral wealth.

I have lately drawn the attention of the Rev. W. B. Clarke to the fact that the eastern coast of New Holland is rising at the rate, say, of an inch per annum, as ascertained by the height of rocks in the Brisbane, above tide-levels, through a period of twenty years; and he assures me that to the south the same result has been inferred, though the observations have not extended through so long a period.

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*4. Partial Ascent of Um Shaumur in the Peninsula of Sinai in 1857. By the Rev. FREDERICK HOWLETT.*

MR. HOWLETT has communicated to the Society a coloured sketch of Um Shaumur, taken on the occasion of an attempted ascent to its highest peak. The following are the particulars of the route taken by his party. They left the Convent of St. Catherine's on camel-back at 8:45 A.M., April 30, 1857, and, passing through the Wadys Sebayah, Rotik and Rufferah, gained the top